What is GRIT?

If your child attended Elliott Elementary last year, he/she has heard the word “GRIT”. It’s something we’ve been stressing around here and will continue to talk about daily. Educational researchers have found that if students are going to be successful in and out of the classroom, they will need the “G” word. Grit has to do with what may be called “stick-to-it-ness” or tenacity (the ‘t’ in GRIT according to author Tom Carr in his book *Got Grit?*) It’s going to take more than being smart to succeed in the classroom or on a team outside of the school setting. Having an open mindset to new learning which supports creativity and a sense of wonder can “grow” your mind according to Carol Dweck, educational researcher. She talks about the power of the open mindset vs. the fixed mindset. If you have a fixed mindset you think “my ability is carved in stone”; “this is hard so I must not be smart”. On the other hand, having an open mindset means “I can grow in my ability through experiences which require effort and struggle.”; “I learn from my mistakes.”

I’ve started hearing and seeing the word GRIT all around. I just realized yesterday as I was thinking about words related to grit that it is actually located in the word ‘inte-grit-y”. Funny how I’ve looked at that word a thousand times and really never noticed it before. One way we as adults can foster building GRIT in our children is to model that behavior ourselves. Do we let them see that we struggle from time to time with something but keep at it because it’s important to us? Children need to know that it’s OK to struggle; that there are going to be things in life we do that won’t always be easy; that when something is easy we’re not learning. Where’s the challenge, the curiosity, the wonder?

Our school doors are opening to new opportunities for learning in our classrooms. We want our children to come full of wonder and creativity and passion. Let’s all work together to let every child know that it’s not about being smart that matters, it’s about being open to new learning and gaining knowledge from the very process of not knowing.

“It’s not that I’m so smart, it’s just that I stay with things longer.”
Albert Einstein

We all can benefit from having GRIT. It’s needed in all facets of our lives. The good news is that our students are beginning to get it! When you’re in our building this year take a look at our GRIT Construction Zone bulletin board in the front hallway. You’ll see GRIT Grams adorning the board as teachers begin delivering them to students who are opening their minds, building their stamina, and becoming more independent as learners in the process. As Emmet might say, “It’s time to Get our GRIT on!”

Stacy Mills
Principal